

COMMITTEE STATEMENT

LB 812

HEARING DATE: 2/9/99

COMMITTEE ON: Education

TITLE: (Bohlke) Create the School at the Center Program and change provisions of the Quality Education Accountability Act

ROLL CALL VOTE – FINAL COMMITTEE ACTION

Advanced to General File

X Advanced to General File with Amendments

Indefinitely Postponed

Vote Results:

8	Yes	Senators Stuhr, Coordsen, Suttle, Bohlke, Raikes, Brashear, Price, Wickersham
0	No	
0	Present, not voting	
0	Absent	

PROPONENTS

Senator Ardyce Bohlke
Beverly Peterson
Doug Christensen
Steve Scherr
Jerry Hoffman
Kyle Wyatt
Megan Lutz
Miles Bryant
Pat Roschewski
John Bonaiuto
Mike Dulaney
Jay Sears
Written:
Doug Gibbs
Barbara Plake

REPRESENTING

Introducer
Nebraska State School Board
Commissioner of Education
Nebraska State School Board, Legislative Committee
School at the Center
School at the Center, Albion High School
School at the Center, Morrill High School
School at the Center
Beatrice Public Schools
Nebraska Association of School Boards
Nebraska Council of School Administrators
Nebraska State Education Association

Nebraska Rural Development Commission
Buros Institute

OPPONENTS

Milford Smith

REPRESENTING

Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association

NEUTRAL

REPRESENTING

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SUMMARY OF PURPOSE AND/OR CHANGES:

Legislative Bill 812 provides for the implementation of educational standards and assessment for public schools, the School at the Center Program, a needs study and cost analysis for local system financial reporting, specific certificates and permits that do not require all of the statutory requirements for teacher and administrator certification, and testing of graduating seniors in education degree programs and instructors of education methodology.

Section 1: Section 79-757 is amended by adding the implementation of standards, the School at the Center Program, and the assessment appropriation intent to the Quality Education Accountability Act.

Section 2: A new section provides legislative findings that high standards are important to quality education, that the public has a right to know how well public school students are learning, that schools should be engaged in continuous renewal, and that implementation of standards is a foundation for renewal, assessment, and reporting of achievement in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and history. Implementation of standards will require resources for professional development and maximizing federal and ESU resources.

Section 3: A new section directs the Department of Education to coordinate programs and services provided for in the Quality Education Accountability Act. The department shall work with various entities to provide professional development, training, and other support services. The State Board shall provide direction by approving a standards implementation plan and an application process for the distribution of funds. An intent is stated to appropriate \$3 million for each fiscal year of the biennium. The funds will be used for stipends for extended time for teachers and administrators to receive professional development or other activities related to implementation of standards and assessment. The funds shall be distributed to public schools based on state and local standards implementation plans. Priority will be given to applications that maximize available resources, include local resource support, include collaborations with ESU's, include a consortium of districts, use principles of quality for professional development, and provide evaluation. Funds received are designated as special grant funds.

Section 4: Definitions for the School at the Center Program include community-based education, evaluation of the effectiveness of community-based education, and operating costs.

Section 5: The School at the Center Program is created for the following purposes:

- (1) Assuring that rural schools meet individual needs and develop skills for students to be effective participants in the civic, cultural, and economic life of their rural community;
- (2) Connecting community and school improvement plans that are consistent with state standards; and

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- (3) Developing clusters of rural schools to provide community-based education consistent with state and local standards.

The Department of Education shall act as fiscal agent and may contract as necessary. An intent is stated to appropriate \$200,000 for each fiscal year of the biennium. The department shall submit an annual report to the Governor, the Legislature, and the State Board on or before December 1. The report will include a description of the demand for the program, a listing of participating schools, the impact of community-based education on community development, and an evaluation of the performance based on goals of rural schools. The State Board shall adopt rules and regulations to carry out the program.

Section 6: Section 79-759 is amended by requiring the Department of Education to contract with a national accounting firm to complete a needs assessment and cost analysis for a financial reporting system for local systems. A report is due to the Education Committee by December 1, 1999. An intent is stated to appropriate \$150,000. The needs assessment and cost analysis shall address necessary updates to the department's data collection and reporting to create a financial reporting system. The requirements for the reporting system did not change. The needs assessment and cost analysis shall identify the reporting needs of the general public, school patrons, taxpayer organizations, business representatives, the Legislature, the Governor, the Department of Education, the media, school districts, ESU's, the U.S. Government, and professional organizations. A review of efforts to redesign reporting systems in other states shall also be included. Specific steps for implementation shall be the main goal. When practical, costs will be broken out for different components and alternatives. If time and resources permit, the relationship of education financial data to other education data shall also be examined.

Section 7: Section 79-760 is amended by modifying the requirement for assessment of student learning. The assessment and reporting system shall be aligned with state standards and shall be implemented beginning with the 1999-2000 school year according to an assessment and reporting plan adopted by the State Board. The purposes of the system are to:

- (1) Determine the performance of public schools in terms of learning related to state standards;
- (2) Report the performance of public schools based upon the results of the assessment;
- (3) Provide information for the public and policymakers; and
- (4) Provide for comparison to district peers and schools in other states and countries.

The assessment and reporting plan shall include all public schools and public school students. The board shall adopt criteria for the inclusion of students with disabilities, new students to the school, and students with limited English proficiency. The plan shall also provide for confidentiality. Language specifying the current assessment requirements and objectives is deleted.

Section 8: An intent is stated to appropriate \$2,450,000 for each year of the biennium to implement the Quality Education Accountability Act. Of those appropriations, \$350,000

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shall be used each year for assisting districts, collecting assessment information, data processing, and preparing the annual state of schools report. The remaining \$2,100,000 for each year shall be given to districts with an approved assessment plan in an amount up to \$30 per student to purchase or create assessment materials, to provide professional development, or to provide incentives for participation in national assessment data.

Section 9: Section 79-808 is amended by replacing provisions for temporary and substitute teaching certificates with a more general authorization to issue specific certificates or permits to applicants to teach, counsel, supervise, or administer in schools on a limited basis based on rules and regulations adopted by the State Board. These certificates and permits may not include all of the statutory requirements for issuance of other certificates or permits.

A program beginning September 1, 1999 and ending December 31, 2001 shall use validated tests to determine the knowledge and skills of graduating students and instructors teaching classes in education methodology. A report is due to the Legislature by December 1, 1999 and each December 1 thereafter through December 1, 2001. An intent is stated to appropriate \$275,000 for 1999-2000 and 2000-01 and to appropriate \$138,000 for 2001-02.

Section 10: Section 79-1003 is amended by adding assessment funding to the definition of special grant funds.

Section 11: This is the repealer section.

EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENTS, IF ANY:

The committee amendments remove all provisions from the bill except section 7, which amends the provisions in § 79-760 for the statewide system of assessment of student learning. Section 7 is amended by delaying the implementation of the assessment plan from the 1999-2000 school year to the 2000-01 school year. The amendments also require the assessment plan to begin with the assessment of reading and writing.

A new subsection is added that requires any district selected by the National Center for Educational Statistics to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (N.A.E.P.).

Senator Ardyce Bohlke, Chair
Committee on Education